

Community heart

Cobridge Community Health Centre is a £14million state-of-the-art facility that provides a new community hub for the integration of public services.

The centre is the realisation of a shared ambition by several organisations to bring together primary and community care, as well as specialist sexual health services for a deprived urban community in Stoke-on-Trent.

Designed as a health campus with services split across two buildings, the health centre incorporates two GP practices, an on-site pharmacy, chest clinic and X-Ray facilities, with primary care services including physiotherapy, district nursing and occupational therapy. The combined Sexual Health Unit (SHU) and Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) – the first in the UK – serves the whole of Staffordshire, providing a multi-agency service for sexual health in the region.





The challenge

The vision for Cobridge Community Health Centre was to improve health service delivery in Staffordshire through the integration of a number of widely dispersed healthcare services and specialist hospital facilities. As part of NHS Stoke on Trent's ten year plan, Cobridge had also been identified as a potential location for a new sexual health support services concept, which would bring together several organisations including the police, specialist medical units and emotional support, all under one roof.

With several stakeholders involved in the development, including the NHS, Staffordshire Police, Local Authorities and the voluntary sector, successful delivery of the integrated facility would require merging individual funding streams and securing additional land to accommodate these services.

With the potential site located at the heart of an area that suffered from anti-social behaviour, the multi-million pound development would not only need to stimulate regional investment but foster a sense of community, encouraging local engagement. The design also needed to remain sympathetic to an adjacent Victorian church and nearby residential properties.

Designed by healthcare specialists One Creative Environments Ltd (One) in close consultation with GPs, staff and the local community, the site masterplan follows a campus-style layout. This reduces the impact of the development on the local landscape, distributing the facilities across two buildings and maintaining access to the adjacent church. Landscaping and planting adds to the campus environment and complements the church through the creation of an area for quiet reflection.



“ **Michelle Urwin, Senior Project Manager for Cobridge Community Health Centre:**

The scheme draws on a wealth of experience and learning across the public private partnership, which shows in the finished building. Patients have commented on how the design is a big improvement from what they're used to and how well it fits within its setting. I'm proud to be part of the team that made this happen for Cobridge. ”

The solution

As development partner to LIFTCo Prima 200, Prime co-ordinated the project from start to finish and using its vast experience of complex site assembly, worked in partnership with NHS Stoke on Trent, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, University Hospital of North Staffordshire, The Home Office, RENEW North Staffordshire and local community interest group, Urban Vision.

Operating on behalf of all stakeholders, Prime negotiated the purchase of an additional plot of land, ensuring sufficient space for car parking without impinging on the facility or the neighbouring church. Its expertise in land transactions also enabled financial close to be delivered quickly.

Using a campus style layout provided the opportunity for a separate building to house both the SARC and the SHU. Accommodating services in this way not only ensures the privacy required but enables Cobridge to become an exemplar facility for community sexual health services.



“ **Chief Constable Mike Cunningham of Staffordshire Police:**

The SARC brings together integrated, specialist interventions and support services, which allows co-ordination with wider healthcare, social care and criminal justice processes to improve health and wellbeing, as well as improve criminal justice outcomes for victims of rape and serious sexual assaults. ”

“ **Sue Scott, Principal Health Improvement Specialist/High Risk, Public Health, Stoke-on-Trent City Council**

Cobridge has given us the opportunity to transform our sexual health services into an exemplar one-stop-shop facility. As well as providing a strong supporting network for staff and patients to encourage use of the facilities, the building has also helped to save NHS and police time.

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Prime comment

“ Steve Sprackling, Development Director at Prime plc on the Cobridge Community Health Centre project:

This scheme shows how we worked simultaneously with a number of organisations to co-ordinate funding and procure health facilities with community needs in mind. It transforms the patient experience for the people of the region, bringing a better range of health services to the community and better access to them. ”

Project at a glance...

Cobridge Community Health Centre, Stoke-on-Trent

Statistics

Size: 2,665 sqm health centre and 1,668 sqm sexual health unit
Client: NHS Stoke on Trent
Value: £14 million

Services and facilities

- Two GP practices
- Sexual Health Unit (SHU) providing genitourinary medicine (GUM), contraceptive services, Chlamydia screening and HIV counselling
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)
- Chest clinic and X-Ray facilities
- Specialist out-patient clinics
- District nursing, health visiting, school nursing
- Adult physiotherapy, podiatry, occupational therapy and speech therapy
- On-site pharmacy
- Walk-in phlebotomy service

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The benefits

As the first facility of its kind, the combined SHU and SARC brings together medical care services, forensics and emotional and legal support, allowing victims to receive the help and advice they need – all in one place. By facilitating co-ordination between the NHS and police, criminal justice processes are improved and valuable time saved for both organisations.

Relocating hospital services into the heart of the community has improved access to specialist treatment for in excess of 200,000 people across the region. The centre is now one of two community facilities in Stoke-on-Trent that provides a walk-in phlebotomy service and due to the clinic's success - serving approximately 4,000 patients each month - is set to expand further.

